**Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting - AFRICA RISING**

Date: 24th July 2015 (9:00 - 11:30 AM)

Location: ICRISAT New Conference Room

# Agenda

* Information sharing on upcoming events
* Management issues
* Brief description of activities conducted since June meeting
* Documentation and reporting
* Activity presentation by site coordinators
* Discussion and the way forward

The opening speech was made by Dr. Birhanu Zemadim who mentioned the regional director Dr. Ramadjita Tabo apologized for not attending the meeting due to other committed meeting. After this the agenda of the meeting was briefed to participants.

# Information sharing on upcoming events: Upcoming events for Africa RISING program in Mali are as follows;

# Donor commissioned external review planned from 5th to 17th October, 2015.

* Africa RSING strategic workshop planned from October 6 to 8, 2015.

Brief description was made on the two events by Dr. Birhanu and he informed partner institutes to be ready to collaborate with the reviewers and keep following information updates posted on the wiki page and through e-mail exchange. Contact list of individuals who are part of the Africa RISING team was submitted to reviewers. In line with this all available documents (presentation, reports and articles) are needed to be submitted to the reviewers. Participants were asked to send available documents to Dr Birhanu before next Friday July 31, 2015.

**Management Issues:** All partner institutes except ICRAF have submitted a counter-signed contract agreement and received the first installment of the budget based on the agreed work plan and budget details. ICRAF had requested clarification on the agreement document and responses were given by ICRISAT grant office in India. However to date ICRAF didn’t sent the agreement document. Dr. Catherine from ICRAF reported that the document was sent to the HQ in Nairobi and is awaiting the DG’s signature.

**Brief description of activities conducted since June meeting:** The months of June and July mark busy time for many participating institutes who were engaged in field implementation and capacity development activities. Agronomic trials have been implemented in most of the intervention villages with few villages pending due to the late arrival of rainfall. Similarly soil and water management technologies and monitoring stations were established in the two technology parks and in farmer fields. The biomass assessment work was finalized pending the species identification work. A survey work was started on gender preference on animal feeding strategies and technologies, 18 tools were reported and video was made. A crop residue chopper machine was demonstrated in Koutiala and a fabricator was identified to produce three more choppers. Considering the enormous data coming from various activities the program is employing tablet based data collection software to use in the TPs and intervention villages.

The delay of contract agreement between AVRDC and IITA, and further delay of rainfall in few places hampered the implementable activities on the ground by AVRDC. However Dr. Jean-Baptist mentioned that field protocols and agricultural inputs were sent to technicians and nurseries have been planted a month ago. Insect attack was a threat that required manufacturing of iron frames. With the help of AMEDD 300 farmers (60% women) were identified for nutrition activities. Training program on nutrition activity was planned in September 2015 and it includes *vegetable production, integrated pest management and compost production*. AVRDC is looking forward hiring a consultant to collect baseline information on nutrition trials in the intervention villages. Similarly AVRDC is seeking to hire a research associate for Africa RISING program.

Farmers in different villages were trained on nursery plant production and grafting technologies. Plastic bags, seeds and mother trees were supplied to participating farmers by ICRAF. Species to be planted in the technology parks were identified and supplied to the field technicians (this in particular refer to the joint protocol made among ICRISAT, ICRAF and AVRDC). The land management practice, contour bunding constructed in 2014 in both M’Pessoba and Sibirila villages was rehabilitated to reduce erosion and surface runoff.

ICRAF together with MoBioM and AMEDD planned to launch two village level Innovation Platforms in the technology park villages (Flola (29 July) and M’Pessoba (31 July).

**Documentation and reporting:** The following documents have been prepared or underway,

* Draft research document was prepared by Birhanu Zemadim
* Abstract accepted for oral presentation at Tropentag 2015 conference by Birhanu Zemadim.
* Draft article is being prepared by Mary Ollenburger.
* Presentation for the month of September by Mary Ollenburger.
* Article submitted to the Journal of World Development by Clarisse Umutoni.
* Draft document prepared on transhumance activities by Clarisse Umutoni.
* Success story on formalization of local conventions in Zanzoni was published on the Africa RISING wiki page.
* A graduate student will be hired by WUR to work on grazing itineraries in Septmeber.
* A consultant will be hired by AVRDC to work on baseline assessment of nutrition activities

**Activity Presentation by site coordinators:** The two site coordinators, Mr. Dicko Mahamadou and Mr. Karamoko Traore presented implemented activities in Bougouni and Koutiala districts for the current agricultural season. The presentations can be accessed here.

[**Bougouni Report by Site Coordinator.pptx**](Bougouni%20Report%20by%20Site%20Coordinator.pptx)

[**Koutiala Report by Site Coordinator.pptx**](Koutiala%20Report%20by%20Site%20Coordinator.pptx)

# Discussion and the Wayforward: Participants discussed on the wayforward and agreed on the following:

* Improve communication among team members.
* Site coordinators are the first contact persons for implemented activities in the field.
* Consider the possibility to purchase field cars for Bougouni and Koutiala to avoid loss of agricultural inputs and data.
* Consider the construction of storage facilities nearby the technological parks.
* Consider another village to replace Yorobougoula, as the later was difficult to access and the urban-commerce practices (gold mining and boarder trade) in the area were the focus of local inhabitants, giving less attention to the sustainable intensification practices.

# The Minute was compiled by Cedrick Guedessou and Birhanu Zemadim

# List of participants

1. Mary OLLENBURGER (ICRISAT/WUC)
2. Clarisse UMUTONI (ILRI)
3. Dékoro DEMBELE (ICRISAT)
4. Jean-Baptiste TIGNEGRE (AVRDC)
5. Caroline SOBGUI M. (AVRDC)
6. Mahamadou Moctar DICKO (ICRISAT)
7. Adama DIAKITE (ICRAF)
8. Karamoko TRAORE (ICRISAT)
9. Birhanu ZEMADIM (ICRISAT)
10. Cathérine DEMBELE (ICRAF)
11. Cédrick Victoir GUEDESSOU (ICRISAT)
12. Sapna JARIAL (ICRISAT)
13. Gaussu Diara (GRADECOM)